The 13th Corps Support Command Public Affairs Office

Media Training:

Meeting the Media in Garrison and on the Battlefield

The Public Affairs Triad

- Community Relations
- Command Information
- Public Information

Community Relations

Direct Interaction with the Public

- Field Band
- Speeches
- Parades
- Leadership Visits
- Color Guards
- Equipment displays
- Civilian aides to the Secretary of the Army

Your Link to the Community

Command Information

Direct Communication with the Internal Army Audience

- Soldier's Magazine
- Army News Service
- Soldier's Radio and T.V.
- Special Event Speeches
- Command Information Package
- Fort Hood Sentinel
- Internet
- Newsletters

Your Link to the Soldier

Public Information

Dissemination of Information to the Public

- Radio
- Television
- Internet
- Print media

Your Link to the World

Public Affairs, the Media and You

Public Affairs Mission

“Public Affairs fulfills the Army’s obligation to keep the American people and the Army informed, and helps establish the conditions that lead to confidence in America’s Army and its readiness to conduct operations in peacetime, conflict and war.”

Source: Vision 2000

Public Affairs Mission

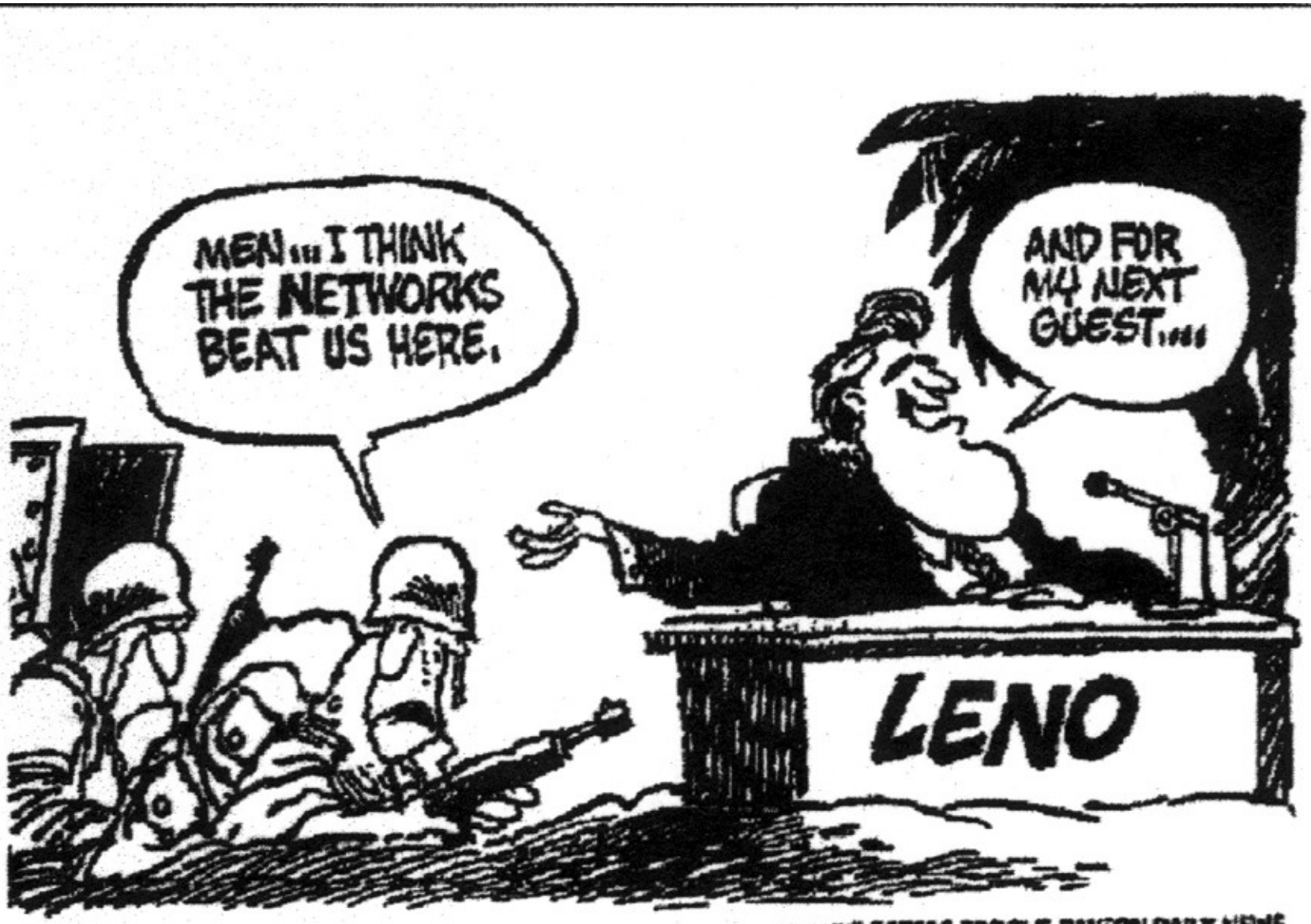
"We, the U.S. Armed Forces, must account for our actions with the American people whom we serve, by dealing openly and well with the representatives of the nation's free press."

JCS Pub 1

Maximum Disclosure with Minimum Delay

The objective of Army Public Affairs when dealing with “bad news” is to release the maximum amount of information in the least amount of time.

FM



BY MIKE PETERS FOR THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS

What Is News?

What is News?

Dog Bites Man *isn't news, but* **Man Bites Dog** *is!*

Components that make a story news

- Immediacy
- Consequence
- Prominence
- Conflict
- Proximity
- Suspense
- Emotion
- Sex/Morality
- Oddity
- Progress

Describe the Media

Know the Media

Today's reporter is:

- smart
- human
- skeptical
- loyal -- to his/her boss & the public
- competitive
- mission oriented -- to get "the story"
- not very knowledgeable about military life or operations

Interview Techniques

Conduct of Interview

- prepare, prepare, prepare
- always tell the truth
- repeat, repeat, repeat KEY MESSAGES
- use everyday language, not jargon
- tape record the interview
- stick to YOUR area of responsibility -- don’t speak on behalf of others
- “I Don’t Know” is acceptable
- don’t use “no comment”

Conduct of Interview

- don’t discuss classified information
- don’t use the media to air grievances about the military -- address your chain-of-command first!
- nothing is off the record -- expect anything you say to a journalist will be used in print
- if you express your opinion, make

Conduct of Interview

*Remember, you **can't** answer questions on the following:*

- future operations
- rules of engagement
- specific numbers of casualties
- troop strengths, numbers and types of equipment

Your Four Interview Weapons

- your mind
- your face
- your body
- your voice

Your Mind

- pause -- pausing allows you to think before talking, and it makes you appear smart to the viewer
- buzzwords -- don’t repeat the negative buzzwords because the reporters questions usually don’t make it to the final product
- broadcast style -- give answers that state your point in 30 seconds or less, and elaborate after you’ve used your SOUNDBITE or HEADLINE

Your Face

- the “open face”

  wrinkles

  eyes

  smile
- the face has 7,000 muscles -- use them to be expressive and open

Your Body

- use your hands!
  - waiting to talk:
    - if standing, keep your hands at your side
    - if sitting, keep your hands in your lap
  - when talking, energize your speech with natural gestures and

Your Voice

- use a conversational tone
- use a warm and informal style
- visualize your audience as one or two people sitting in their living room 7-10 feet away

Sound Bites

- get across your message: what are the five best and five worst things about your unit/operation?
  - Why are they good or bad?
  - What are you doing about them?
  - How do these things relate to, or effect, different audiences?
- “wargame” your responses to get your point across in less than 30 seconds
- bridge from the question to your point every chance you get

Trick Questions

- loaded preface
  - the reporter poses a question with a false claim inherent in the question: “Captain, why is your unit trained so poorly?”
- response technique
  - dispute premise up front and follow with one of your top 5 points.

Trick Questions

- either/or:
  - reporter poses a question that offers two bad alternatives: “Lieutenant, are you aware that your vehicles are falling apart, or do your soldiers just tear them up?”
- response technique:
  - same as Loaded Preface, dispute it up front and follow with one of your 5 top points.

Trick Questions

- pregnant pause:
  - you finish a response, but the reporter looks at you expectantly and says nothing.
- response technique:
  - don’t feel as if you you must keep talking, politely inquire if the reporter has additional questions

Nasty Interview Styles

- the machine gun:
  - the interviewer asks several questions at once -- "Why are you here, what are you going to do, and when are you leaving?"
- response technique:
  - politely say, "Those are excellent questions. Let me answer the question about … first."
  - then, select the top five points you want the public to know.

Nasty Interview Styles

(continued)

- interrupter:
  - interviewer won’t let you complete your response
- response technique:
  - politely say, “As soon as I finish my answer, I’ll be happy to respond to another question.”

Nasty Interview Styles

(continued)

- paraphraser:
  - interviewer restates your response unfairly -- “So captain, what you’re telling me is you can’t control your soldiers …”
- response technique:
  - dispute his claim and politely say, “That’s not what I said.”
  - then restate your top point or make a comment that demonstrates your sincerity.

Nasty Interview Styles

(continued)

- dart thrower:
  - uses negative implications or terms -- “So major, why are your soldiers here to murder innocent civilians?”
- response technique:
  - dispute negative implication up front and avoid using the reporter’s buzzwords
  - use a “top five” response.

Interview Setup

Setting the Stage

- pick the background
  - remember to check for clutter or anything that may create an unsightly appearance
  - ensure background is free of sensitive items or views
- wear the right type of clothing and remove your head gear
- position yourself so the audience can see both of your eyes, but talk to the reporter

Critical PA Ground Rules

- “on the record”
  - direct attribution
    - “Colonel John Smith said today…”
  - indirect attribution
    - “A senior staff officer acknowledged …”
  - remember, everything is “on the record” -- if you don’t want info published, don’t say it
- “background”
  - information that provides details on an event, incident or a subject -- background is often not intended for publication

Public Affairs 'Be' Attitudes

- be yourself
  - avoid technical jargon and fancy language
- be comfortable and confident
  - relax
  - remember you're the subject matter expert
- be honest
  - if asked a question and you don't know the answer, it's **OK** to say, "I don't know"
  - credibility is crucial

‘Be’ Attitudes

(continued)

- be brief
  - keep it short and simple
- be human
  - use humor if appropriate
- be personal
  - use stories and anecdotes
- be positive and consistent
  - keep the message in mind

‘Be’ Attitudes

(continued)

- be attentive
  - Concentrate and listen to questions
- be energetic
  - user gestures, facial expressions and body language
- be committed and sincere
  - speak convincingly

Bottom Line …

- consult your Public Affairs Office as you would your attorney.
- be forthright, positive and proactive in dealing with the media.
- take prudent risks.
- soldiers are our best spokespersons
- prepare, prepare, prepare.

You only get one chance to make a favorable first impression.

Scenario I

- Your unit is preparing to deploy to SWA in support of ***Operation Desert Eagle***. Desert Eagle's purpose is to deter Iraq's potential invasion of Kuwait. You leave tomorrow and don't know when you'll redeploy. Your maintenance status is good, but repair parts are a problem. You think your soldiers' morale is positive.

Task

- Prepare for a local TV interview with Paul Howell. He will be here in 10 minutes. He wants to talk to you about your unit's upcoming deployment. The interview will be taped for the 6 p.m. news.

Scenario II

- You are head of the Family Readiness Group for a unit preparing to deploy to Brazil in support of ***Operation Jungle Hawk***. Jungle Hawk's purpose is to deter Brazil's potential air strike on Columbia. You don't know when the unit will redeploy. Families are concerned, as the command hasn't been available to answer their questions.

Task

- Prepare for a local TV interview with Gerrold Johnson. He will be here in 10 minutes. He wants to talk to you about the Family Readiness Group’s plans for the upcoming deployment. The interview will be taped for the 6 p.m. news.

Scenario III

- Your unit is deployed in Togo supporting ***Operation Phantom Fox***. Phantom Fox's mission is to promote peace in Togo. The unit recently suffered casualties, and soldiers beaten by rebel factions in Togo were shown on the morning news broadcast. Your unit has suppressed the rebel uprising, but American media have been calling for an air strike on rebel holdings. The operation's mission remains the same.

Task

- Prepare for an international TV interview with Italian reporter Stoney Brook. He will be here in 10 minutes. He wants to talk to you about the unit's recent casualties, and projected plans for dealing with the rebel factions in Togo. The interview will be taped for the 6 p.m. news.

Scenario IV

- Your unit has re-deployed from Israel, where they were supporting ***Operation Black Knights***. Black Knights' mission was to protect Israel from Lebanese invaders. The unit suffered massive casualties, and congress ordered American withdrawal from Israel . International media has portrayed the American forces as weak, and the troops have been treated poorly by Americans since their home-coming.

Task

- Prepare for interviews with newspaper reporter Bruce Webber and Channel 51’s Calvin Clover. They will be here in 10 minutes. Webber wants to talk to you about the unit’s disappointments, while Clover wants to know what the unit will do in the future. The newspaper story will run tomorrow, and the TV interview will air on the 6 p.m. news.